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ATIRA PROVIDES 100-DAY UPDATE ON CONTINUED PROGRESS OF THE RESET AND RENEWAL PROGRAM

Interim CEO and management team continue to build a change program, renew public trust and deliver governance and operational excellence while supporting some of the most vulnerable in the DTES and greater Metro Vancouver region.

Vancouver, B.C. | Unceded traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations |

The Atira Women's Resource Society continues to provide 3,150 units of housing and shelter along with wrap-around support programs across Metro Vancouver and Vancouver Island, even as it strengthens its own practices.

"As someone who comes from outside the social services sector, I am truly inspired by what I have seen in the dedication and deeply thoughtful approach of Atira employees and its leadership," said Catherine Roome, Interim CEO. "Through these months of increased attention, I know we are proud of the progress we have made to reset and renew the organization, and Atira remains committed to delivering *Housing to Hope* to the most marginalized citizens in BC."

When announced as Interim CEO, Catherine Roome laid out a program of change designed to build public trust, stabilize the organization's financial health and achieve governance and operational excellence. To date, those commitments, as well as new ones, have been completed. The organization has:

- Introduced a code of conduct into Atira's existing daily practice policies and procedures, emphasizing that conflicts of interest would not be tolerated.
- Actively pursued dialogues with various partners, funders and donors, including their primary funder, BC Housing, to articulate Atira's new direction and the continued unwavering commitment to making a positive impact.
- Introduced a whistleblower line through IntegrityCounts to foster a speak-up culture.
- Focused on improving the employees' experience of an occupationally healthy, safe and secure working environment.
- Conducted Atira's first risk assessment through a participatory and inclusive process that actively engaged staff members from every level of the organization, including the Board of Directors. The resulting risk assessment will ensure Atira's operations continue to run with a continually evolving and clear understanding of risks, supported by effective mitigation measures.
- Reviewed compliance with all applicable statutes and regulations.
- Reviewed all existing operating contracts with BC Housing.

- Reviewed all existing real estate assets, resulting in a decision to list a surplus 1,500 sq ft work/live space for sale.
- Worked in partnership with the Provincial Government's imposed operational review to determine gaps in the organization's business processes.
- Introduced a board governance review with an independent third party to modernize all oversight practices.
- Welcomed a BC Government independent representative to attend Board meetings.
- Widened the senior management team with both interim and permanent talent for Atira's future success.
- Initiated recruitment of a permanent CEO. This included a consultative process that engaged all Atira staff over several days in shaping the profile of the future leadership to align seamlessly with Atira's values and new objectives.

The thought leadership that Atira brings to housing and support services never wavered. While organizational and governance changes were underway, Atira's employees continued to provide support to women, children, gender-diverse individuals and mixed-gender tenants across many exceptional and innovative programs:

- During the past 100 days, Atira received funding from Infrastructure Canada to open a First Nations, Métis and Inuit Wellness Centre in the Lower Mainland.
- The organization was awarded continuing funding for numerous overdose prevention sites by Vancouver Coastal Health.
- Corrections Canada renewed its contract with Atira to provide supports, services and interventions for women to meet the challenging needs of women offenders in their safe transition and community reintegration.
- BC Housing continued its partnership with Atira in funding and supporting low-barrier/no-barrier housing units that eliminate the intersectional barriers that often prevent BC's most vulnerable citizens from seeking support.
- The Vancouver Infectious Disease Centre continued its ground-breaking research collaboration with Atira.

Given the emphasis on improving employee health, safety and security and removing unacceptable tenant safety and financial risk exposure, Atira notified BC Housing on August 11, 2023, that it is withdrawing from its operating agreement for The Patricia Hotel. It is owned by BC Housing and is one of several SROs Atira currently operates on behalf of the provincial government. The agreement with BC Housing does not cover all costs, and the building requires structural and mechanical repairs to make it a safe place to live and work.

Atira conducted asset risk assessments using the seven standards that define "Adequate Housing" as recognized in international human rights law and enshrined in the 2019 National Housing Strategy Act (see Federal Housing Advocate's Observational Report – BC 2022). Atira's asset risk assessment on SROs was developed in cooperation with Vancouver Fire and Rescue based on data they collected and on critical incident data from Atira. Those assessments have been shared with BC Housing.

"We are grateful for the expertise and change leadership Catherine has brought during this time as we refocus the Atira organization on mission-driven operational excellence," said Elva Kim, Board Chair. "Atira's work is more essential than ever as a result of the overlapping crises we

face in British Columbia, including housing, the poison drug supply, and a deteriorating security situation. With Catherine and our senior executives leading the way, we are much better positioned to provide safe housing for the women, children and gender-diverse individuals and safe work environments for our employees.”

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Atira operates 3,150 housing units for women, children, and all gender individuals in the Lower Mainland. More information is available on our website here: atira.bc.ca.

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